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ABSTRACT

Although recent research suggests that individuals active in social protest in the 1960's maintain their activist identities, the structural links which allow the continuity have yet to be identified. A review of research reveals that the continuity of self-identification, political attitudes and activities, and occupational choices is influenced by proximity to and interaction with movement members; that is, structural support must exist. Radical political attitudes are generated and sustained through interaction with other like-minded individuals. One theory is that activist networks forged during the (1960's) survive in a highly fragmented form. Any given individual may only be linked to one or two others, but when aggregated, these connections can expand to a large proportion of the population. Another possibility is that individual continuities are sustained through new networks forged on a local level by former activists. Recent evidence of these networks is seen in the rapid mobilization of the anti-draft and nuclear freeze movements. Thus, in spite of the seeming disinterest in collective action, the United States could be closer to widespread protest than appearances would suggest. (KC)

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Structural Continuities in Protest Activity: the Legacy of Sixties Activism

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paper presented at the Annual Meetings of The American Sociological Association, San Francisco, California, September 5-9, 1982.

Traditionally social movements have been studied as separate entities with little attention to the linkages between contemporaneous protest efforts. This despite occasional studies (c.f. Evans, 1980) documenting extensive personnel, organizational, and indeological links between such movements. Much the same point can be made with regard to "protest eras." That is, much energy has been expended in explaining the presence or absence of widespread insurgency in a particular era without reference to the continuities in protest activity between eras. Yet the suspicion remains that such continuities exist and represent a largely unexamined topic in movement analysis. In this paper, then, the general topic of movement continuites will be explored with particular emphasis on the structural links between protest activity in the 1960's and contemporary insurgency.

Discontinuity as a Theme

As regards the legacy of 1960's activism, the popular interpretation seems to stress a marked disjuncture between the turbulence of that era and the quiescence of the late 70's and 80's. What is being posited is a fundamental discontinuity between the events and attitudes of the present and those of a decade or so ago. Oftentimes the current activities of prominent 60's activist-personalities are offered as "evidence" to support the discontinuity hypothesis. Often cited in this regard are the born-again Christianity of Eldridge Cleaver, and the conventional occupational pursuits of Rennie Davis and Jerry Rubin. More generally, the media has tended to characterize the 70's and 80's as a quiescent era marked by a "swing to the

right" politically and the rise of a new hedonism among the general public. Whalen has nicely paraphrased this portrait:

> There has been a good deal of media bombast on the aftermath of the sixties...While only a decade ago the big media story was that youth were in revolt, challenging tradition, attacking the system and bringing America to the brink of anarchy, the cultural apparatus now proclaims the victory of the counter-revolution: the revolt is over as suddenly as it began, the young radicals have grown up and now embrace the system they once defied, their younger brothers and sisters are apathetic and consumed by careerism...
> (1981: 3-4)

Academic scholarship has tended--at least until recently--to support the popular perspective summarized by Whalen. It has done so in a variety of ways. First a number of authors have explictly posited a certain discontinuity in the post movement activities of 60's activists. For example, Foss and Larkin (1976), characterize the 70's as a period of wholesale withdrawal from activist politics in favor of a retreat into various accomodationist lifestyles. Lipset and Ladd (1972), among others, subscribe to a "maturation" perspective which ascribes a certain moderating influence to the aging process. Applied to the 60's activists, the maturation thesis would seem to predict a gradual dimunition in activism as well as a disavowel of extreme political attitudes over time.

Besides these explicit perspectives sociologists have also reinforced the discontinuity thesis implicitly. Quite simply, the virtual ignorance of the topic in social movement analysis has served to convey an unmistakable message: social movements are discontinuous phenomena generally confined to a narrowly circumscribed historical period. This message is further reinforced by the two major theoretical perspectives in the field of social movements.

Neither the collective behavior nor resource mobilization model offers a theoretical basis for or acknowledgement of the phenomenon of links between movements separated in time. Indeed, both models can be criticized for their ahistoricism, both as regards the origins and consequences of social movements. In both models, movements appear as short lived entities disembodied in time and, in regard to the collective behavior perspective, political context. In the collective behavior model, movements emerge as little more than collective attempts to manage the psychological tensions engendered by a social system under strain (c.f. Smelser, 1962). As such movements are seen as ephemeral phenomenon whose function derives not from any political effectiveness, but from the expressive outlet they afford participants. Accordingly the long range consequences of social protest are virtually never addressed by collective behavior theorists.

The same is true of the resource mobilization perspective. Proponents of the model have described social movements as a response to short run changes in the availability of resources required to support insurgency (McCarthy and Zald, 1973). One would expect, however, that these expanded resource opportunities would be fairly short-lived, thus limiting the duration of movement activity. For instance, McCarthy and Zald (1973), in their early presentation of the resource mobilization perspective, stress the general prosperity of the 1960's and the rise in discretionary income it triggered as the key factor in the generation of widespread insurgency during that era. However, having elevated resource expansion to a dominant causal position, one can only assume that the general economic downturn of the 70's and 80's had the effect of virtually eliminating any prospects for ongoing insurgency

Thus, we are again left with the image of social movements as discontinuous in time, lasting only as long as external funding support persists.

Recent Evidence of Continuity

Recently, however, a handful of follow-up studies of former 60's activists have been published which sersiously undermine any simplistic notion of discontinuity between protest eras. These studies suggest considerable continuity in the self identification, expressed politcal attitudes, occupational choices and reported political activities of the former activists. Because of the importance of these studies, they will be summarized in some detail.

Perhaps the most extensive of the published works are those of James Fendrich and his associates (Fendrich, 1977; Fendrich, 1974; Fendrich and Krauss, 1978; Fendrich and Tarleau, 1973). Based on survey data gathered in 1971 on former white Florida State students active in civil rights activity as undergraduates and two control groups of non-activists, the body of work cited above report persistant differences in the political attitudes and behaviors on the activist and non-activist samples. Former activists were far more likely to define themselves as radicals--54 to zero percent-- or liberals--25 to thirteen percent--than non-activists (Fendrich and Krauss, 1978: 247). In behavioral terms, the former activists also continued to manifest high rates of particiaption in movement activities. Seventy-one percent report having participated in demonstrations and 36% having engaged in some form of illegal political activity following graduation (Fendrich, 1974: 116). Finally, former activists were more likely than non-

activists to eschew careers in traditional occupational fields in favor of jobs either in education or the social service sector (Fendrich, 1974: 116).

Findings consistent with these are reported by other investigators as well. In 1977 Nassi and Abramowitz conducted a follow-up questionaire study of former Berkeley Free Speech arrestees. Results of their research were reported in two subsequent articles (Abramowitz and Nassi, 1981; Nassi and Abramowitz, 1979). Consistent with the findings reported earlier, Nassi and Abramowitz found that "more former activists were employed in social service or creative occupations than in any other job category...Job histories did not indicate strong upward social mobility, and average income was less than would be expected for persons of their age, socioeconomic and educational background" (Nassi and Abramowitz, 1979: 32). The Nassi/Abramowitz respondents also continued to identify themselves as radical or liberal in political philosophy, express strong retroactive support for the Free Speech Movement and endorse leftist politics generally.

Maidenburg and Meyer (1970) report similar findings in an even earlier study of Free Speech Movement arrestees conducted in 1969. The authors found that over half of their sample remained active in protest activity. While half of the respondents were not employed, the largest single group of those who were, were employed as teachers or social workers.

Finally, in intensive interviews with former participants of the 1970 burning of the Isla Vista branch of the Bank of America, Whalen and Flacks (1980) uncovered patterns similar to those reported earlier. Respondents manifested "strong continuity in their political attitudes" (Whalen and

Flacks, 1980: 222), while avoiding the traditional occupational and familial committments of others their age (Whalen, 1981: 7-8).

Weaknesses of the Evidence

The consistency of the above findings is impressive. It suggests a level of continuity in belief and action missing in the popular accounts of the fate of 60's activists as well as the dominant scholarly models of social movements. These studies, however, are not without problems, however. For one thing, they are beset by a number of methodolotical deficiencies. Virtually all of the studies are based on very small samples. Whalen and Flacks, for example, interviewed eleven former activists; Nassi and Abramowitz, fifteen. Moreover, all of the samples are drawn from a narrow geographical area, thus presenting problems of generalizability. Finally, only the studies by Whalen and Flacks and Nassi and Abramowitz were conducted well after the close of what is popularly conceived of as the activist era. In the case of the others it is possible to argue that insufficient time had elapsed to judge the consequences and continuities of protest involvement. That leaves us with data on only 26 subjects interviewed at least ten years after their initial activism.

There is, however, perhaps a more serious weakness with these studies. Indeed, the methodological deficiencies can be excused in light of the exploratory nature of the studies. Perhaps less defensible is the investigators exclusive focus on the individual continuities or consequences of protest activity. What is missed in such a focus are the structural roots

of the attitudinal and behavioral continuities under study. The resulting perspective would appear to represent a truncated view of the long-range consequences of activism, with the individual activist regarded as the object of study with little regard for the larger structural context of his or her life. This view is especially puzzling in light of the increased attention granted the associational determinants of activism in recent research and writing on social movements. The thrust of these efforts has been to shift the focus of attention from the grievances and ideological committments of individual activists to the structural arrangements that afford activists the opportunity to act on their committments. For example, in a review of various studies of differential recruitment, Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olson (1980), have shown that "recruitment is not merely a function of dispositional susceptibility, but is strongly influenced by structural proximity, availability, and affective interaction with movement members" (p. 787). Lacking the structural opportunity to participate in protest activity, it may not matter that the individual is ideologically disposed to do so. Indeed, in many instances, "ideological predisposition" may not only be insufficient, but unnecessary, in accounting for individual activism. Discontent may itself be learned through participation, with initial activism resulting from prior integration into the protest community. Burt Useem's data on participants in Boston's anti-bussing movement is suggestive in this regard. His data "...fail to support the breakdown contention that discontent is the product of social disorganization. Disorganization and discontent were inversely, nor directly, correlated. This finding suggests that discontent is generated by social organization

and group solidarity" (Useem, 1980: 367). In some instances, then, the roots of discontent as well as activism are to be found not in the individual characteristics or attitudinal predispositions of movement participants, so much as the structural circumstances of their lives.

To date, however, the shift in the general movement literature from social psychological to structural determinants of activism has not been mirrored in the otherwise laudable studies of former activists noted earlier. The attitutdinal and behavioral continuities revealed by these studies would appear to be attributed to the individual efforts of disembodied former activists intent on retaining their earlier identities and lifestyles. The growing evidence of the structural roots of activist identities and behavior renders this view a highly suspect one and opens up a potentially fruitful line of research. If, as these exploratory studies suggest, the former 60's activists continue to manifest considerable continuity in their political identities, values and, to a lesser extent, activities, we must inquire into the structural supports for these continuities. What communities or formal organizations are encouraging or sustaining the values and identities of the former activists? To what extent are activist networks forged during earlier movements still in place? What role, if any, have they played in contemporary protest efforts? In short, what are the <u>structural</u>, as opposed to individual continuities linking the protest movements of the 1960's and 70's with the present? And what is the political significance of these structural links? In the remainder of this paper these questions will be addressed in speculative fashion.

Links Between Contemporary Movements

While this paper is most centrally concerned with the continuities between movements separated in time, the links between contemporaneous movements represents an important and neglected topic in its own right. Indeed, the two topics are very much related. For both these reasons, then, the topic of contemporary linkages will be explored at some length.

If there is anything approximating a consistent finding in the social movement literature, it is that social movements develop out of existing organizations or associational networks. The list of studies supporting this conclusion is impressive. Freeman (1973) has documented the crucial role played by the State Commissions on the Status of Women and associational networks of the New Left in the emergence of the National Organization of Women and the radical wing of the feminist movement respectively. In his analysis of Quebec's Social Credit Party, Pinard (1971) has demonstrated the mobilizing effects of a wide variety of intermediate groups (see especially chapter 11). In a study of two contemporary anti-pornography groups, Curtis and Zurcher (1973) provide convincing data to support their contention that the movement developed out of the broad "multi-organizational fields" in which both groups were embedded. Finally, both McAdam (1982) and Morris (1981), in their respective analyses of the origins of the civil rights movement identify such indigenous institutions as the southern black churches, colleges, and local NAACP chapters as the organizational base out of which widespread black protest activity first developed.

Unfortunately, virtually all research has stopped at this point. Most analysts are content merely to document the established associational roots

of a single discrete movement. But movements don't simply emerge from existing social networks, they also create new ones. This process can be conceptualized in terms of diffusion theory. Participation in protest activity represents a new cultural item subject to the same dynamics of spread or adoption as any other innovation. Applying the insights of diffusion theory to social movements merely serves to underscore the importance of established associational networks in the process of movement emergence. One of the consistent findings from empirical studies of diffusion can be summarized as follows: the rapidity and extensiveness of diffusion is largely a function of the degree to which potential adopters are tied together by means of interpersonal networks of contact.[1] In part, then, the importance of existing organizations in the development of insurgency owes to their role as natural "channels of diffusion" through which protest participation can spread. Thus in virtually all movements, activity is expected to spread initially along existing lines of interaction. But almost invariably, protest activity results in the establishment of contact between previously unconnected groups of people. New networks are forged and old ones expanded, thus facilitating the spread of insurgency into population segments initially removed from the original protest site. Moreover the links established through such contacts are likely to be of the "weak" variety argued by Granovetter (1973) to be the most effective channels of diffusion possible. The importance of Granovetter's thesis for this paper necessitates a bit of a digression.

According to Granovetter, the immediate social circles of two people linked to one another by "strong" ties are likely to converge to a considerable degree. To the extent that person A becomes friends with person B, person A

is also likely to have regular contact with other friends and acquaintences of person B. In an extreme case one can even imagine two people--perhaps a married couple--sharing exactly the same universe of social contacts. On the other hand, if two people have only infrequent contact with each other--that is, they are bound together by "weak ties"--they may very well share no additional social contacts in common. The question is which situation is the more advantageous for diffusion? Granovetter argues persuasively that it is the latter since information passed between persons bound by weak ties is more likely to reach third parties unavailable to the original source than if it were transmitted between persons sharing strong ties. In effect, weak ties serve as "bridges" connecting separate and distinct population segments, which is precisely what is required for a movement to spread beyond its localized origins. The relevance of these observations stems from the fact that protest activity frequently results in the creation of just such "bridges." In the civil rights movement, for example, the student sit-ins led to unprecedented contacts between black students, black clergymen, and representatives of the established civil rights organizations (McAdam, 1982). The result was a greatly expanded protest network facilitating the dramatic escalation in protest activity that occurred in the years 1960-1965.

Another excellent example of the production of interpersonal "bridges" through insurgency is provided by the Mississippi Freedom Summer campaigns of 1964 and 1965. In these campaigns large numbers of (primarily) white volunteers were brought to the South to aid in the registration of black voters, the staffing of freedom schools and, perhaps most importantly, the dramatization of the continued denial of black civil rights in Mississippi.

The long-range consequences of the campaign, however, were probably more significant than its immediate impact. The project served to link southern black activists with northern college campuses by means of the intervening "bridges" provided by the summer volunteers. In addition the interpersonal links between northern campuses were greatly expanded and strengthened through the contacts volunteers established with one another in the South. The result was the creation of new channels of diffusion through which protest tactics, organizing techniques, political ideologies, even activist identities and styles, could be spread to a previously quiescent population. Evans (1980) has nicely captured this dynamic in the following passage:

> Networks of communication multiplied as more and more northern students came to the south for brief periods and returned to work in the Northern Student Movement, SDS, or other "movement" groups.
>
> Thus activist northern students in the early sixties knew a great deal about the south. They could easily identify leaders and important personalities, and discuss recent events reported through the movement grapevine. They defined their work in the north as in many ways a spinoff, an extension of events in the south through supportive picketing, fund raising, and community organizing. They looked to Fannie Lou Hamer, James Forman, and Stokely Carmichael for leadership.
>
> Northern activists also developed more analytical and abstract versions of the southern movement's concepts like racial equality and beloved community, reflecting the different environemnt of the northern insurgency. (p. 104)

The "bridging" function of insurgency can help explain the continuities between contemporaneous protest efforts and why apparently distinct movements tend to cluster in time. The fact is these movements are not distinct at all. The generation of a single successful movement often results in the development of an expanded protest infrastructure out of which "other

movements" emerge.

This would seem to be the case in the 1960's and early 1970's. The various movements of that era appear not so much as discrete movements as various organizational offshoots of a single diffuse protest network. That network had its roots primarily in the civil rights movement, but soon expanded to include participants in, among others, the student, anti-war and women's movements. Indeed, as various accounts make clear, there was tremendous overlap in personnel in all of these movements. Evans (1980), for instance, shows that the ranks of the radical wing of the women's movement were initially filled by veteran activists who were both disillusioned and radicalized by their experiences in the civil rights, student, and anti-war movements. Her work also clearly documents the continuities in personnel betweeen the civil rights and early student movement. Sale's (1973) massive history of SDS serves to confirm Evan's portrait by implicitly demonstrating the personnel as well as ideological, tactical and organizational linkages between the New Left and the civil rights movement.

Nor would the 1960's appear to be unique among protest eras in terms of such continuities. Historians have often provided evidence of the interconnections between social movements in earlier periods of insurgency. Perhaps the best example conerns the 30 or so year period of reform activism that preceded the American Civil War. In the social histories of this era, clear continuities can be seen between the abolition, temperance, peace and women's rights movements (Cross, 1950; Foner, 1970; Griffin, 1960; Melder, 1964; Tyler, 1944; Walter, 1978).[2] The participation of such prominent activists as Frederick Douglas, William Lloyd Garrison, Sojourner Truth

and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in several of these movements is but the most visible (and least significant) manifestation of these continuities.

Thus the evidence of extensive personnel and other linkages between contemporaneous protest movements is impressive, even if largely unappreciated by sociologists used to studying single movements. Indeed, the history of many movements is often little more than a chapter in a larger history of an extended era of insurgent activity. And invariably, at the heart of this larger history is the story of the establishment of "weak" interpersonal ties joining individual activists or groups of activists into a diffuse and enduring protest community.

Links Between Chronically Separate Movements

So much for the continuities between contemporaneous protest efforts. But what of movements separated in time? Specifically, what, if any, structural continuities exist between present-day American society and the protest movements of the 1960's and early 1970's? On the one hand, the answer is we don't really know. As noted earlier, what little research has been completed on connections between the two eras has focused almost exclusively on the individual characteristics, attitudes and lifestyles of former activists.[3] At the same time, drawing on suggestive bits of evidence we can offer a more conclusive, if highly speculative, answer to the question of structural continuities. That answer suggests that the insurgency of a decade or so ago has survived in more than simply the memories or attitudes of former activists. In addition we can speak of a certain "structural legacy" to the era. The evidence for such a legacy is, at best, indirect. Yet it is sufficiently consistent as

to suggest the clear presence in contemporary American society of various structural continuities linking the present with our recent activist past.

One piece of evidence attesting to these linkages comes from the "individualistic" studies of former activists discussed earlier. As a general rule, those studies have shown the former activists to remain committed to the general leftist political values and identities they espoused earlier and more active in movement politics than their non-activist counterparts.[4] These findings raise the important question of what structural circumstances are supporting these continuities in belief and action? As the growing body of empirical evidence on the dynamics of activism makes clear, isolated individuals do not ordinarily participate in social movements regardless of their ideological afinity with the cause (Gerlach and Hine, 1970; Snow, Zurcher, Ekland-Olson, 1980; B. Useem, 1980). As Gerlach and Hine argue, "no matter how a typical participant describes his reasons for joining the movement, or what motives may be suggested by a social scientist on the basis of deprivation, disorganization or deviancy models, it is clear that the original decision to join required some contact with the movement" (1970: 79). In light of this connection between activism and prior contact, the ongoing movement involvement of the former activists would seem to suggest that they remain integrated into social networks that encourage activism.

Similarly, the former activists continued adherence to their earlier political attitudes and identities also suggests support for the integration thesis advanced here. The point is radical political attitudes, no less than activism, are typically generated and sustained through interaction with other like minded individuals. Useem, for instance, found discontent

to be directly related to integration in his study of the Anti-bussing movement in Boston (1980: 367). The relationship makes sense upon reflection. Involvement in protest activity would seem to require a critical stance towards aspects of the larger society. To quote Piven and Cloward: "Large numbers of men and women who ordinarily accept the authority of their rulers and the legitimacy of institutional arrangements come to believe in some measure that these rulers and these arrangements are unjust and wrong" (1979: 3-4). It is important, however, to recognize that this cognition is "overwhelmingly not based upon observation or empirical evidence available to participants, but rather upon cuings among groups of people who jointly create the meanings they will read into current and anticipated events" (Edelman, 1971: 32). The key phrase here is "groups of people." That is, this process of "consciousness raising" is held to be far more likely under conditions of strong rather than weak social integration. Lacking the information and perspective that others afford, isolated individuals would seem instead more likely to commit what Ross (1977) has termed the "fundamental attribution error," and explain their troubles on the basis of personal rather than system characteristics. Thus the former activists continued espousal of a radical critique of American society suggests they remain in close contact with others who reinforce and sustain their characteristic political perspective.

The presence of fragmentary activist networks dating back to the 1960's is also suggested by various studies which attribute to former activists a disproportionate role in several contemporary social movements. Walsh (1981), for example, has noted the prominet role played by "veteran activists from

the 1960's" in the mobilization of the burgeoning anti-nuke movement around Harrisburg, Pennsylvania in the wake of the accident at Three-mile Island. Similarly, impressionistic acccunts of other major organizational components of the fractious anti-nuke movement--notably the various alliances that comprise the New England wing of the movement--have made note of the older age structure of the activist core. Then too the organizational style of the movement, stressing decision making by consensus, rotating leadership positions, etc., suggests the unmistakable imprint of 60's activists steeped in the tradition of "participatory democracy."

The so-called Neighborhood Movement would also seem to benefit from the presence of a disproportionate number of veteran activists from the 1960's and early 70's. This contention is supported by Oliver's (1981) interesting study of the composition of the movement. From questionaire data collected at the 1979 convention of the National Association of Neighborhoods, Oliver reports that 40% of her respondents were previously active in the civil rights movement, 28% in the anti-war movement and 20% in the feminist movement (1981: 27). Even allowing for overreporting, these percentages are indeed impressive. Surely a comparable sample of the general public would have yeilded percentages much lower than those reported above. Boyte's (1980) descriptive account of the movement, punctuated throughout with accounts of the prominent role played by veteran 60's activists in local organizing efforts, serves merely to flesh out and support Oliver's data.

Taken together the evidence from these movements again suggests the presence of activist subcultures or networks in contemporary America. It is simply hard to reconcile the disproportionate role played by former

activists in these movements with notions of individual isolation and network disintegration. Then too the speed with which mobilization has occurred in several contemporary movements fails to support such a characterization. Writes Whalen:

> The rapid mobilization against the draft registration plan last year suggest that solidarity and organization...was perhaps stronger in 1980 than in 1965...What once took months, even years, to organize was being done in days. If this is so, then the following sorts of questions become pertinent: What was the basis of this solidarity? Who were the organizers and what experience and resources did they have to draw upon? Finally, what are the social ties between those who protested the war in the sixties and their counterparts last spring? (1981: 33-34)

As yet we have no answers to these questions. But the implication is clear: as rapid and thorough a mobilization as occurred in the case of recent anti-draft protest does not occur in an organizational or associational vacuum.

The clear thrust of the various threads of evidence reviewed above is to suggest the existence of strong structural continuities between the 1960's and the present. Precisely what form these continuities take is not clear. It may be that the actual activist networks forged during the 1960's and early 70's survive in some highly fragmented form, much in the way former high school graduating classes remain tied together over time. Any given individual may only be linked to one or two others, but when aggregated these connections are likely to extend to a surprisingly large proportion of the total population. Composed almost exclusively of interpersonal "bridges," such a structure, as noted earlier, is a highly effective mobilizing tool. Such a network is consistent with the type of rapid mobiliza-

tion noted by Whalen in connection with recent anti-draft activities in this country.[5]

Another possibility is that the individual continuities in activism and attitudes noted earlier are sustained through new networks forged on a local level as former activists seek out or naturally establish relationships with persons whose biographies closely parallel their own. Such a scenario could help to explain the full flowering of local citizens movements discussed by Boyte (1980), Oliver (1981) and others. Faced with the disintegration of national activist networks, the veterans of earlier movements may well have turned their attention to the creation of local support structures in an effort to sustain organizing and collective action in their own communities. Until further study, however, these two structural possibilities remain pure speculation.

Finally, as tantalizing as the evidence regarding structural continuities is, the significance of these continuities should not be overstated. As important as existing structures are in the generation of insurgency, they are hardly sufficient in themselves to create a social movement. At least as important are the shared assessments of the prospects for successful insurgency among potential insurgents and the alignment of groups within the larger political environment (McAdam, 1982). The first can be conceived of as the level of "insurgent consciousness" within the movement's mass base and the second, following Eisinger (1973: 11), as the "structure of political opportunities" available to movement groups. It is in regard to these two factors that conditions in 1968 and today would appear to be decidedly

discontinuous. Whereas a decade or so ago popular opposition to the Vietnam war and the general turbulence of the era had rendered this country's political elite unusually vulnerable to insurgent challenge, the same can hardly be said for today. Similarly, throughout the 1960's large numbers of people believed in the efficacy of collective action. Today popular opinion regarding such efforts would seem impressionistically to be marked by feelings of fatalism, impotence and resignation. In short, the structures needed to generate and sustain insurgency may well be in place, while the power of elite groups and the generally pessimistic perception of the prospects for collective action remain antithetical to movement activity. This might help account for the unusual pattern of movement activity in contemporary America. While the general level of activism has remained relatively low during the past decade, we can also point to several instances of rather rapid and widespread mobilization for collective action. Such instances have tended to occur in the face of demonstrated elite vulnerability, as in the accident at Three-mile Island, or when elite responsiveness has appeared to confirm the efficacy of collective action. The current nuclear freeze movement would seem to fit the latter case. Thus despite the apparent disinterest in collective action in contemporary America, we may be closer to widespread insurgency than appearences would suggest. And should such a resurgence of activism occur in the near future, the veteran activists of the 1960's may yet prove Harrington's (1972) prediction of two decades ago to be prophetic. By sustaining the various structural vehicles necessary to insurgency, the former activists may indeed have more of an impact on the 1980's than the 60's.

Notes

1. For a general review or introduction to the diffusion literature, see Brown (1981), Lionberger (1960), or Rogers (1962).

2. I am indebted to Lois Horton for the references cited here.

3. At present I am engaged in research with two colleagues, Lois Horton and Victoria Rader, which we hope will redress the long-standing neglect of the topic of structural continuities in the movement literature. We are presently gathering questionaire data on a random sample of former Mississippi Freedom Summer volunteers in order to learn, among other things, of any other movement involvements they may have had subsequent to their Freedom Summer experience, their contemporary political/organizational involvements and the degree to which they have maintained contact with other of the Freedom Summer volunteers. Preliminary data from this research should be available within six months.

4. A couple of studies have actually reported a drop in movement participation among the former activists (c.f. Nassi and Abramowitz, 1979; Whalen, 1981). This is hardly surprising in light of the general decline in insurgency in this country over the last decade or so. The real question is whether the former activists remain more active in movement politics than those former students who were not active in collective action during the 1960's. My suspicion is they do, but these studies have generally failed to provide comparative data that would permit such a determination.

5. Much the same pattern of rapid spread has also been evident in regard to the development of the nuclear freeze movement in this country.

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